

Pratt Parley P.

AN ADDRESS

BY A MINISTER OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF
LATTER-DAY SAINTS,

To the People of England.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CHRISTIANS,

Aware of the anxiety of the public mind in relation to the faith and principles of our society, and of the many erroneous notions which are abroad concerning them, and which are calculated to prejudice the mind before we can obtain a hearing, we cheerfully offer this address, in order to give some information of our real principles, and hope it will be perused in the spirit of candour in which it is written:

The "LATTER-DAY SAINTS" believe in the true and living God, and in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was crucified according to the Scriptures, and who rose from the dead the third day, and is now seated at the right hand of God as a mediator.

We also believe in the Holy Scriptures of the prophets and apostles, as being profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, &c.; and that all mysticism or private interpretation of them ought to be done away. The Scriptures should be taught, understood, and practised in their most plain, simple, easy, and literal sense, according to the common laws and usage of the language in which they stand—according to the legitimate meaning of words and sentences, precisely the same as if found in any other book.

Words are but signs of ideas; and if the Deity would communicate ideas to mankind by words, he must of necessity do it according to the laws of the language; otherwise the communication would be unintelligible or indefinite, and therefore unprofitable. The prophetical and doctrinal writings contained in the Bible are mostly adapted to the capacities of the simple and unlearned—to the common sense of the people. They are designed to be understood and practised, without which no one can profit by them.

The gospel dispensation revealed and established *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* Holy Spirit; in short, *one* system of religion, *one* church, or assembly of worshippers, united in their doctrine, and built upon the **TRUTH**, and all bearing the general name of **SAINTS**. God is not the author of jarring and discordant systems. **HIS KINGDOM IS NOT DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF:** and for this reason we have no confidence in the sects, parties, systems, doctrines, creeds, commandments, traditions, precepts, and teachings of modern times, so far as they are at variance with each other, and contrary to the Scriptures of truth. We have, therefore, withdrawn from all these systems of error and delusion, and have endeavoured to restore the ancient doctrine and faith which was once delivered to the saints, and to build society upon the truth in its purity and

fulness, hoping thereby to enjoy the peculiar gifts and blessings, which were so abundantly bestowed upon the church in ancient times.

In saying this, we do not call in question the morality, the sincerity, or the spiritual enjoyment of individuals belonging to any religious system. On the contrary, we feel assured that there are many sincere and zealous persons in every denomination. It is the PRINCIPLES we reject, not men. It is the system that we wish to see established in purity, that those who are builded upon it may be pure also. It is the fountain that should be pure, and then the stream is easily kept so.

But if any prefer their own doctrines to those which we consider to be true, and we cannot by fair reason and scriptural argument convince them of the correctness of ours, we wish them to have the privilege of enjoying their religious rights unmolested. We have no disposition to persecute them.

We hold it as the duty of all men to believe the Gospel; to repent of their sins, and to be immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ FOR REMISSION OF SINS. And we hold, that all who do this in a proper manner, and under proper authority, are legally entitled to the remission of sins, and to the gift of the Holy Ghost, according to the Scriptures. Now, faith and repentance go before baptism, as a necessary qualification; and, therefore, infant baptism is of no use. All penitent believers should be baptized with the faith and expectation of receiving remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, as much so as Naaman the Assyrian washed seven times in Jordan with the expectation of being healed of his leprosy; or as much so as the Israelites sounded the trumpets around the walls of Jericho, with the expectation of their being thrown down; for the same God who attached a promise to the performance in these cases, has attached a promise to the conditions of the Gospel. (See Acts, chap. 2.)

But now, concerning authority in the administrator. When a minister from France comes to our Government to do business as an ambassador, he must be commissioned by his Government, or all his transactions will be null and void, and France would never fulfil any promise which he might make in her name, however sincere our nation might be in believing him sent.

And so it is with the ambassador of Christ. He must be specially sent, or commissioned to minister in his name, or all his baptizing and other ordinances will be null and void, so as never to entitle the candidate to remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, according to promise.

The "Latter day Saints," after immersion, lay on hands in the name of Jesus, for the gift of the Holy Ghost, according to the ancient pattern. They are then considered saints, or members of the Church of Christ, in full fellowship and communion. They are then taught to observe all things which are required or commanded by Christ and his apostles—such as meeting together often to sing, to pray, to exhort, to testify, to prophesy, to speak with tongues, to interpret, to relate their visions, revelations, &c.; and, in short, to edify and perfect each other, by a free exercise of all the gifts of God, as set in order among the ancient churches. We also teach them to walk in all the ordinances of God blameless, such as the partaking of bread and wine, in remembrance of his broken body.

and shed blood, on the first day of the week; and also to send for the elders of the church when any of them are sick, that they may pray for them, and lay their hands on them in the name of Jesus, or anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, that they may be healed according to the Scriptures. We also teach them to abstain from all immorality; such as injustice, pride, vanity, dishonesty, evil speaking, falsehood, hatred, envy, avarice, intemperance, adultery, fornication, lasciviousness, &c.; and to practise all the virtues—such as love to God and good will to man, brotherly kindness, charity, temperance, industry, &c. He that has two coats let him impart to him that has none, and he that has food let him do likewise; but he that will not work, neither shall he eat. In short, we teach them to do all the good in their power—to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world.

As to the fulfilment of prophecy, we believe in the great restoration of Israel, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, in Palestine, and that, when that time comes, the Saviour will come in the clouds of heaven, and all the saints with him; that the dead in Christ will rise to meet him; and that he will destroy the wicked by the brightness of his coming, and bring the whole earth under his own dominion, and put it into the possession of the saints, when there will be a reign of universal peace for one thousand years, after which comes the resurrection of the wicked and the last judgment.

As to the signs of the times, we believe that the gathering of Israel and the second advent of Messiah, with all the great events connected therewith, are near at hand. That it is time for the saints to gather together, and prepare for the same.

Having given this brief sketch of our faith and principles thus far, the enquiry may arise, whether we believe in any other writings or books besides the Bible? to which we reply in the affirmative; for, like all other Christians, we believe in every true book within our knowledge, whether on science, history, or religion. We have implicit confidence in the "Book of Mormon," not, however, as a new Bible to exclude the old, as some have falsely represented. We consider the "Book of Mormon" as a historical and religious record, written in ancient times by a branch of the house of Israel, who peopled America, and from whom the Indians are descended. The "Book of Mormon" corroborates and confirms the truth of the Scriptures, by showing that the same principles were revealed and enjoyed in a country and among a people far remote from the scenes where the Jewish Bible was written.

Suppose a traveller should find in China, in the East Indies, or in America, or New Holland, a historical record, handed down for thousands of years, or deposited in their sacred archives, or amongst their sepulchral ruins, or their monuments of antiquity—and in this record should be found the principles of eternal truth, revealed to that nation, and agreeing with the revelations and principles contained in the Jewish records. Or suppose, for instance, when the ten tribes of Israel are discovered, preparatory to their return to Palestine, a record should be found among them, giving their history from the time they were car-

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ried captive by Salmanezer, King of Assyria, and this record should be interspersed with prophecies and doctrine, as revealed among them since their captivity. Would it be anything incredible or injurious in its nature, or anything against the truths revealed in the Jewish records? Certainly not. So far from this, it would be hailed by every lover of truth as a most interesting and important discovery. Its light would be hailed as a new era in the history of the great events of modern times.

And similar in its nature is the Book of Mormon. It opens the events of ancient America. It pours a flood of light upon the world on subjects before concealed—upon the history of a nation whose remnants have long since dwindled to insignificance in midnight darkness, and whose former greatness was lost in oblivion, or only known by the remains of cities, palaces, temples, aqueducts, monuments, towers, fortifications, unintelligible inscriptions, sepulchres, and bones. The slumber of ages has now been broken. The dark curtain of the past has been rolled up. The veil of obscurity has been removed as it regards the world called *new*. The ancient events of America now stand revealed in the broad light of history, as far back, at least as the first peopling of the continent after the flood. This discovery will yet be hailed among all nations as among the most glorious events of the latter times, and as one of the principal means of overwhelming the earth with knowledge. But, why then, is it so much opposed and neglected at the present time? Why do prisoners groan in chains, and martyrs bleed in its promulgation to the world? Answer,—Upon the same principle that a Messiah was crucified, a Stephen stoned, a James slain, a Paul beheaded, a Peter crucified, a John banished, a Rogers burned, a Columbus neglected, ridiculed, and envied, a Newton counted mad, and a Fulton laughed to scorn. In short, it is BECAUSE THEY KNOW NOT WHAT IT IS.

If the people wish further information, our Elders are now in various parts of the kingdom, and would gladly preach the gospel in its ancient fulness, wherever doors are open, and opportunity presents. All invitations for preaching will be kindly received by them, and attended to as far as possible.

We also publish a Monthly Periodical, entitled "THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS MILLENNIAL STAR," Price 6d. *These, together with our Books, can be obtained wholesale and retail at No. 149, Oldham Road, Manchester; or of our Elders or other Agents throughout the kingdom. All orders for books or papers will be strictly attended to, if addressed to P. P. Pratt, Editor of the Star, No. 149, Oldham Road, Manchester.*

Manchester, May 28, 1840.

PARLEY P. PRATT.

P. S. A large Edition of the Book of Mormon is now printing, and we hope soon to be able to supply the demand.—A New Selection of Hymns is just published, and may be had at our Office, and by all our Agents in the Kingdom.

Preaching every Sabbath in the Carpenters' Hall, at Half-past Ten o'clock; Sacrament Meeting at Half-past Two; and Preaching at Half-past Six.